



A  
 LETTER  
 To Mr. S.  
 A ROMISH PRIEST  
 CONCERNING  
 The Impossibility of the Publick Establishment  
 OF  
 POPERY  
 HERE IN  
 ENGLAND.

May 19. 1672.

SIR,

SINCE I was last with you I have thought of what you said, *That ere long all Our Parish Churches would be in your Possession*: This hath occasioned me to Write (I will not say my Advice) but my Opinion. That you and your Clergy should not Attempt that which I perceive you have already in your Speculations: They who know the History of your Services in the last Wars, and since, must acknowledge that you have deserved well of your

your Prince, in that not onely you asserted his Cause in the Field with the loss of a Limb, but which is more, you Discovered to one of his great Ministers of State the Design of the Roman Catholicks, managed by Sir K. D. and Father H. an English Sorbonist, to put their part of this Nation under the Subjection and Patronage of Oliver. It is in respect to you, and so many as are of your Loyalty as well as Religion, that I wish in the Game they now play, by venturing high, they may not lose all. You are much mistaken, if from a Toleration you conclude an assurance of Publick Establishment. It is one thing to gain a favourable look, another, that one should so fall in love, as to Espouse your Cause. Consider the Difficulties, if not Impossibilities, which in great Number oppose your Hopes. The Chiefest, as you ought to apprehend, is the firm Resolution of the King to Defend the Church of England, as it yet stands; a Resolution in him so immovable, that neither an Interest in Mighty Princes, obtainable by such an Exchange, could Invite, nor the Arguments of Military Men could Perswade him to renounce that Church, from which he then received no Advantage, but the satisfaction of her Communion, and suffering in her Defence. You cannot but know withal that to believe Him inclinable to you, is to Commit Treason in your Hearts, since that to say so, is declared Treason by an Act of Parliament. But if you should prove so Sanguine and full of Fancies, as to believe what was formerly ineffectual, might now prevail: I cannot commend your Judgment, except you shew that either your Religion is better, or else that Interest doth more strongly draw the King towards you now than heretofore. For the former part, Religion, you say it ought not in the least to be altered; and we acknowledge if it were Reformed it will be less worth to the Clergy. For the other, concerning Interest of State, if it dissuade under those Circumstances, much more will it at this Day. In those Times he might by this course have been Restored to three Kingdoms. Now he would hereby give up half his Jurisdiction, to wit, Supremacy; and after a while, a good part of his Revenue, the appendant Possessions of his Supremacy: But this is not the worst; for besides this by setting up Popery, he sets up the Pope as his Colleague and fellow Sovereign in all His Majesty's Dominions. He gives him at once all the Clergy, and implicitey as many as they frighten with Purgatory and Hell — To Obey Gods Vicar rather than Man: This hath been done, not in the case of the Church alone, but in Temporal Quarrels betwixt him and other Princes. But if you still hold the conclusion against unanswerable Objections, what means pray can you propose whereby this may be accomplished? Exercise all your Imaginative Power, Fancy any thing, though never so unlikely to be granted or practised, so it be but in the utmost degree of Possibility. There are but two ways to do it, either by Parliament, and you cannot expect that this Parliament, which appeared so earnest against your Toleration, should set you up as the National Church. And if you hope this Parliament may quickly Dye of Old Age, and that another more favourable to the Distressed, may sit in their rooms, you will find your self mistaken; and that it is not your Party shall be the Men, but rather such, who though they served your turn, never Loved you when they were uppermost.

Let me farther advise you not to forfeit your discretion so far, as to expect as sudden a publick Change of Religion now by a Parliament, as was in Queen *Maries* dayes; Then the Reformation had onely been begun by King *Edward* his six years Reign, and Carelesly Managed by the Greatest Persons under Him, whose Chiefest aimes appear to be quite another thing: So that there-  
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by whilst they Neglected to bring over the Countrey Gentlemen to Protestantisme, they confirmed them in Popery. Thence was it that the Romanists might much better promise themselves to be restored under that Queen, then at these years when people still remember her; and for several Generations have been reconciled to the Reformation by Writings in those Controversies, and held in by penal Lawes—, and estranged from *Rome* by 88. and the 5th. of *November*. Now you cannot look for any Good from a Parliament, you may rightly Dread their displeasure; especially if you should stretch your Liberty of Conscience to the perverting of other Mens: For do what you can, and Declaim never so much against a Parliamentary Religion; The Commons will have a Committee for Religion, or else Liberty and Priviledge are utterly lost. So that you ought by a private exercise of your Worship, and a peaceable De-meanour to provide for the coming of a Parliament, as by Repentance men do for Death, because it cannot be avoided, but may be made less hurtful—. By this time, I suppose, you may have laid aside all hopes of being Advanced by a Parliament, and cast your Thoughts towards a standing Army; Certainly you will find this conceit as Aiery as any of the rest, for (besides that he whose Authority should raise it, intends you no more then a bare and limited Toleration) there are very many and Obvious Hinderances of that project; The Kingdom being an Island, takes away the pretences hereof, which are alleadged by our powerful Neighbours, and allowed by reason of their Scituation. So that on the surmizes of such a thing, the Mutinous Temper of this Climate would appear as Jealous of their Liberties, as in some Countreys men are of their Wives. And withall, where could you raise Men for the Service? your own Gentlemen of Estates would not endure Forreigners; and they must necessarily want home-born Souldiers, their being not a sufficient Number of your Religion, and of none to give the law of Armes to all your Adversaries. And where will you get the main Weapon, Money? Though your Religion should open their stock and Treasure as for a Holy War, yet in a little Time either their stock or their Zeal would be spent, and then an Army in its own Country cannot so easily get Bread by the sword, as Labouring men can do by the spade. For proof of this, you may call to mind how that both Rump and Army were well nigh famished into a *Dissolution*, when the Countrey declared they would pay no mores Taxes. In such Necessities Souldiers like Beasts of prey will fall one upon another and devour their Keepers too; And if you believe them to be wholly Mercenary, they are never so likely to be hired to a design contrary to their former Commission, as when their Masters cannot pay, nor their Enemies can be plundered, yet will freely part with mony upon their own termes. You see, Sir, how I have followed your Propagators through all, both Probable and Wild Methods, which they can invent; all which appearing Unprofitable and Unlikely, they will not surely like vain Projectors, waste what they have, for that which they can never obtain—.

Your Servant—